

Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

Players in the Drama of the Cross, Part 1

Scripture: Mark 14:1-2

Code: 41-71

Well let's open the Word of God to the fourteenth chapter of Mark. Now I want to tell you that today is going to be a very important day both this morning and tonight, as we go through the first sixteen verses of chapter 14, actually this morning we'll go through the first two and tonight...tonight it will be 3 to 16. So don't anybody sit in the window, as if there was a window in here.

This section with the beginning of chapter 14, takes us to the cross. We are now in the shadow of the cross. The great discourse sermon on the Second Coming of Christ is complete and Mark now moves us into what I looked at as the Holy of Holies of Scripture. We go inside the veil to see the blood sprinkled. This is the sacred ground of holy Scripture, the account of the cross. And, of course, all four gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, contain this. And as we go through chapters 14, 15 and 16 and the cross and resurrection is the theme of these, we're going to look at the details related to the Lord's death and His resurrection. But the opening 16 verses deal with the players in this drama. Of course, the stage belongs to Christ. He is the featured player in this unbelievable drama. Everybody else is a bit player. Everybody else is a walk-on. But they do have a role. There is the role played by the Sanhedrin, the Jewish leaders. There is the role played by Mary who anoints Jesus. There is the role played by Judas who betrays Him. And there's a role in His preparation for His death played by even His followers, the disciples.

We're going to see the role they play. And we're going to see Christ in center stage. But there is someone who isn't mentioned here who is the main player, that you might say He is the supernatural director of the drama and it is none other than God. Much like the book of Esther, in which everything that happens, happens under the sovereign working of God, though God is not seen, everything that happens here in the preparation, in the trial, in the execution of Jesus is being carried out by the unseen hand of the invisible God. God is accomplishing His purpose through all of these role players who each have a function, a moment on the stage. But He's behind it all.

Let me read these sixteen verses to you. "Now the Passover and unleavened bread were two days away and the chief priests and the scribes were seeking how to seize Him by stealth and kill Him, for they were saying, not during the festival, otherwise there might be a riot of the people. While He was at Bethany at the home of Simon the leper and reclining at the table, there came a woman with an alabaster vial, of very costly perfume of pure nard and she broke the vial and poured it over His head. But some were indignantly remarking to one another, 'Why has this perfume been wasted? For this perfume might have been sold for over three hundred denarii and the money given to the poor.' And

they were scolding her. But Jesus said, 'Let her alone, why do you bother her? She's done a good deed to Me, for you always have the poor with you and whenever you wish, you can do good to them, but you do not always have Me. She has done what she could. He has anointed My body beforehand for the burial. Truly I say to you, wherever the gospel is preached in the whole world, what this woman has done will also be spoken of in memory of her. Then Judas Iscariot who was one of the Twelve, went off to the chief priests in order to betray Him to them. They were glad when they heard this and promise to give him money. And he began seeking how to betray Him at an opportune time.

"On the first day of Unleavened Bread, when the Passover lamb was being sacrificed, His disciples said to Him, 'Where do You want us to go and prepare for You to eat the Passover?' And He sent two of His disciples and said to them, 'Go into the city, and a man will meet you carrying a pitcher of water, follow him and wherever he enters, say to the owner of the house, "The teacher says, where is My guest room in which I may eat the Passover with My disciples?" And he himself will show you a large upper room furnished and ready; prepare for us there.' The disciples went out and came to the city and found it just as He had told them; and they prepared the Passover."

In this preparation for His death, the rulers play a role, Mary plays a role, Judas plays a role and the disciples play a role. But the power behind the scenes is none other than God who is orchestrating every detail of the death of Christ. This is the unfolding of the divine plan. This was established by Acts 2:23 says, the predetermined purpose of God. Jesus' death was not an accident, it was not a revolution gone bad, it was not a failed idea, it was a divine plan.

In fact, in Acts 4 it says that you did what God purposed you would do in killing Jesus. Himself, Jesus said, the Son of Man has come to give His life a ransom for many. You see, the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ has always been the focal point of Christianity, the heart of salvation, the key reality of the gospel and the central theme of the entire body. The cross is the apex of redemptive history, the ratification of the New Covenant, the single atonement for sin, the satisfaction of divine justice, the propitiation of holy wrath, the epitome of sovereign love and grace, the necessary object of saving faith and the only hope of eternal life. Because of the importance of the cross, it is previewed in the garden when God killed a sacrifice to cover a naked Adam and Eve...naked after they had sinned.

It is previewed in the promise, moments after the Fall and the curse when God reveals a man would come who would be wounded by Satan, but who would crush Satan's head. The cross is previewed in Abel's acceptable sacrifice. The cross is forecast in the ark that saved eight souls. The cross is seen in the sacrificial animal that was found in the place of Isaac on Mount Moriah. The cross is in view in the Passover lambs that were slaughtered in Egypt, whose death and blood protected the families from divine judgment. The cross is portrayed in the smitten rock in the wilderness which gave forth water to the thirsty people. The cross is previewed in the serpent lifted up in the desert for healing. The cross can be seen in the action of Boaz, the kinsman redeemer. The cross is anticipated

in all Levitical sacrifices. And the cross is explicitly prophesied in detail in Psalm 22, Isaiah 53, and Zachariah 12, even down to the very things that happened to Jesus and the very words He said.

When John the Baptist identified Jesus as the Messiah, he said, "He is the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world." Everybody knew that a lamb was only useful and acceptable to God if it was killed. John the Baptist knew then that the Messiah had to die. They all knew that was what the Old Testament made clear.

Revelation 13, and though it's at the end of the Bible, takes us even before Scripture and before creation, Revelation 13 says that Jesus was the lamb slain before the foundation of the world, meaning that the plan for the death of Christ was precreation. This is not a good idea gone bad. This is what has been planned from eternity past. The cross alone provides the penitent believer in Christ with the forgiveness of all his sins forever and the promise of eternal heaven and eternal joy.

Understanding this, the significance of the cross, the sweeping breadth of its truth, no wonder we sing so many songs about the cross, right? The cross and the resurrection is the supreme testimony of God's goodness, His saving love, His righteousness, His grace, His mercy, His wisdom, His justice, His holiness and every other attribute. That is why all four gospel writers end their histories of Jesus with the details concerning His death and resurrection. This is the high point of all history.

Jesus, you know, had spoken of His death, hadn't He, on a number of occasions. He probably spoke of it very, very often. There are four times in the gospel of Mark just in recent chapters in which He made reference specifically to being arrested in Jerusalem, being mistreated, being killed and rising the third day; chapter 8 verse 31, chapter 9 verse 31, chapter 10 verse 33, and in a parable form in chapter 12 verse 7. So this is no surprise to any reader of Scripture and it's no surprise to Jesus and shouldn't have been any surprise to those who had heard Him refer to His death. Throw away that notion of skeptics and critics and unbelievers that things went south on Jesus and something bad happened to His good intentions. This is where God has been taking Him, as well as all redemptive history, since before time began.

Now as we come to chapter 14 then, we enter in to the final words of Mark and he moves us toward the cross and the resurrection. We're going to look at preparation for His death. We're going to look at His agony, His betrayal, His arrest, His trial, His denial, His denial of Peter, the crucifixion and the resurrection. So these next weeks are going to be wonderfully thrilling weeks for us.

Now as we come to chapter 14, again I remind you it is on Wednesday night that we find our Lord. He has been on the Mount of Olives looking back on the temple ground on the eastern side of Jerusalem. And He has just completed His great teaching on His Second Coming to establish His Kingdom. That is finished now. Jesus ends the day then with the disciples, talking about His Second Coming and His Kingdom. Meanwhile, meanwhile, the leaders are intent on planning and pulling off

His murder. How out of touch with reality are they?

As the account in chapter 14 unfolds, we see the different players and the first ones we meet are the religious leaders. But before we can look at them in verses 1 and 2, we've got to back up a moment and identify the one who is orchestrating everything by His providential power, and that is none other than God. That's implied in the opening statement. "Now the Passover and Unleavened Bread were two days away." That is not incidental information. It is the purpose of God that on that Passover in A.D. 30, on the fourteenth of the month Nisan, at the very hour when the Passover lambs were being slain on the Passover, three in the afternoon, Jesus would die. That's pretty specific.

God's plan was that in A.D. 30, Nisan 14, on the Passover on Friday at three o'clock in the afternoon, or about that time, when all the Passover lambs were beginning to be slaughtered, the true Passover would die. Jesus died at three o'clock on that Friday at that Passover. What makes it interesting is, that is exactly the time the leaders didn't want to have to kill Him. That was the last time they would have wanted to murder Him, but that was God's time and they frankly were not in charge. It's so important for you to see this because all the way through, we're going to acknowledge the unseen hand of God in every single detail.

Now there were three main feasts the Jews celebrated; the Feast of Pentecost, which was kind of a firstfruits, Feast of Booths, they're remembering the wandering in the wilderness, and the Feast of Unleavened Bread. The Feast of Unleavened Bread, you remember, commemorated the exodus when they made the Unleavened Bread left Egypt. These were celebrations to commemorate past events in their history.

The Feast of Unleavened Bread was seven days long and commemorated the Unleavened Bread in the exodus back in Exodus chapter 12 verses 15 to 20. It was held on Nisan 15th to the 21st, that would be around April right at this time of the year. Originally it was during barley harvest, according to Exodus and the book of Deuteronomy. The fourteenth was the day before. The day before the Unleavened Bread was Passover and that was the order they appear in verse 1. The Passover is on the fourteenth, starting the fifteenth and running for seven days, the Feast of Unleavened Bread because you remember that when they left Egypt, prior to their leaving with their Unleavened Bread, there was the Passover. Kill the lamb, put the blood on the doorpost and the lintel and the angel of death will Passover you. And they were celebrating God's salvation of them in Egypt with their Passover. They still do it, it's the Jewish Seder.

Passover, by the way, comes from a Hebrew word *pesach* which means to jump over because the angel of death jumped over their blood-splattered houses in Egypt. The Feast of Unleavened Bread was then connected to the Passover so that they were terms used interchangeably.

God's purpose, now let's follow this, God's purpose was to have the Lord Jesus...listen...eat the Passover with His disciples on Thursday night. Listen to this timetable.

On Thursday night when the Galilean Jews celebrated Passover, and we'll say more about that tonight, and that Passover celebration would go into midnight and beyond, so late Thursday night they're having the Passover, they're in to Friday. The plan was to have Jesus arrested very early in the morning, tried in the morning, which was illegal, sentenced in the morning and crucified in the morning and die at three Friday afternoon and be in the grave before six cause He had to be three days in the grave. What an amazing timetable. And then rise again Sunday.

If you got all these people together and try to organize that, you couldn't pull it off, that kind of precision timetable. Mark identifies the fact that the Passover and Unleavened Bread were two days away. It's still Wednesday. Friday is the day for Jesus to die. This is God's plan...this is God's plan. Jesus even said in John 10:18, "No one takes My life from Me, I lay it down myself." And you remember when He was hanging on the cross and He said, "It is finished, and He died," they were shocked? The reason they were shocked was He screamed at the top of His voice before He died, and if He had the air in His lungs to scream at the top of His voice, He had enough air to survive.

Many times His death was sought, many times. But His enemies were never able to kill Him. Go back to chapter 3 in Mark and verse 6, you see an illustration of it there. But go back even before that, go back to the first time His life was sought by Herod who decided that he wanted to kill Him while He was still an infant. By the time he got the information, he knew that this child who he saw as a threat to his throne was under the age of two and so he sent his soldiers into the region around Bethlehem and massacred all the male children two and under. But he missed Jesus because an angel had come to Joseph and warned him about this massacre and told him to flee to Egypt and not come back until Herod was dead.

Very early in His ministry in Nazareth, He went into the synagogue to preach, according to Luke 4, and because He indicted the people for their sinfulness, literally the people in His own hometown who had known Him all His life tried to throw Him off a cliff because His teaching so offended them. But He passed out of their midst and they didn't even realize it.

On another occasion, recorded in the fifth chapter of John, He went to the pool of Bethsaida near Jerusalem and He healed a crippled man and He did it on the Sabbath which infuriated the leaders. And it says the Jewish leaders were seeking all the more to kill Him because He was breaking the Sabbath and He was calling God His Father and making Himself equal with God. They would have killed Him right there on that Sabbath or the next day, but they were unable.

In John 17:25, there's an interesting statement about Jesus. It is this. He is called there with a title, maybe you never saw as such, but here was the title by which He was designated. He became known as "The man whom they are seeking to kill." The man whom they are seeking to kill. You don't even use a proper name. He's just the man they're seeking to kill.

In John 7, the temple police were sent to kill Him, to arrest Him that they might execute Him. They returned empty handed. They were stunned by His power and authority and all they could do was mumble that they never heard anybody speak like Him. There are probably many more attempts on the life of Jesus that aren't recorded for us in the gospels, but recorded or unrecorded, every one of them failed because it wasn't His time...it wasn't God's time for the Lamb to be slain. The Lamb would be slain at the Passover on this year on that day. The very details of the schedule were set.

Luke 22:22, Jesus said, "The Son of Man goes as it has been determined." In Acts 2:23, "Determined by the foreknowledge of God." The predetermined foreknowledge of God. Divinely decreed to die at the Passover when the lambs were being slain because He was the Lamb of God whose death would take away the sin of the world.

Philip explained to the Ethiopian that Jesus was the Lamb predicted by Isaiah. Isaiah said He was like a lamb led to slaughter who before His shearers says nothing, Acts 8. Paul said to the Corinthians in 1 Corinthians 5:7, "Christ is our Passover," meaning our Passover Lamb, "who has been sacrificed for us." It was Peter who said that the unblemished Passover Lamb was foreknown before the foundation of the world and that we were not redeemed by silver and gold, but by the precious blood of the Lamb without spot and without blemish. John said that the Lamb that was slain was worthy to receive power and riches and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing. All the Bible before and after sees Christ as the sacrificial lamb.

When you look at the events concerning the Lord Jesus Christ on the surface, the arrest, the unjust trial, the unjust execution is a heinous series of crimes, and its perpetrators bear the guilt for the injustices. No victim of injustice was ever more innocent than the sinless Son of God, the most innocent because perfectly righteous, perfectly holy, perfectly sinless. He therefore was unjustly accused and He was unjustly executed. No person ever suffered a greater injustice because there's never been a perfect person. And no one ever suffered more agony than He did because suffering such an injustice was an agony He had never experienced. It was undeserved, it was unfair, it was unjust and it was agonizing.

Actually, He was openly murdered by those who acknowledged His flawlessness. Pilate said, "I find no fault in Him," and then had Him killed. From the human side, this is an unparalleled act of injustice. Nothing in the world's history could ever come close to this because if the truth were known, if the law is what Jesus said it was, if you hate in your heart, you're equal to a murderer, all of would be justly

executed. But this man had not sinned, the God/Man, the only truly, sinless person who ever lived, innocent, blameless, virtuous, holy, undefiled, yet He is killed and He is killed not by accident, but He is killed on purpose. He is murdered unjustly at the hands of men.

And can I add something that maybe you never thought about? He suffered unjustly at the hands of men and He also suffered at the hands of God. There was nothing by which men could indict Him and there was nothing for which God could indict Him either. He was punished for sins He didn't do, right? What the Jews accused Him of, He didn't do. They finally accused Him of leading an insurrection against Caesar. He didn't do that. They punished Him for what He didn't do, but God punished Him for what He didn't do also. He suffered as if He was guilty. The most evil act ever perpetrated by evil men, and yet the most wonderful, loving act ever perpetrated by God. The worst miscarriage of justice in history and yet the greatest satisfaction of justice in history. The cross is full of paradoxes and conundrums. Human injustice at its worse, of course, but the crucifixion of Jesus Christ was also the greatest act of divine justice. Even though God killed Him for sins He didn't commit, God killed Him for sins we did commit...we did commit, done for the most wonderful purpose, to secure the salvation of sinners and bring them to heaven. If you don't understand the cross this way, you can't be a Christian.

There's an old liberal idea denying the atonement of Christ, denying His substitutionary death, denying that He was a sacrifice in our place on whom the justice of God fell so that we might escape it, an old liberal thing that says Jesus is just an example of giving yourself up for someone, a model of love. That concept of Jesus as an example would say to us that you need to be willing to give your life up for somebody you care about, throw yourself in front of the bus and push the person off. Is that what it was?

That old liberal heresy has reappeared in the last month in a book by Rob Bell called Love Wins. That's a heresy. And the supposed ten thousand people that are in that, whatever it is, I can't call it a church, but whatever it is in Grand Rapids, Michigan where he is, he also denies eternal punishment. The people who are sitting there listening to this ought to run as fast as they can in the opposite direction from that place before they end up in the hell he denies because if you deny the substitutionary atonement of Jesus Christ, then you deny the gospel. This is the heart of everything. You can't turn Jesus into an example of sacrificial love. He was God's victim.

Another popular view is that this is to be rejected because its divine child abuse, the Father killing His Son. He was, however, God's victim. He was killed by the holy one who loved Him. He was killed by the one who loved Him perfectly, to satisfy divine justice and divine righteousness on behalf of unworthy, undeserving sinners so that, not for us, so that God might give to His Son through His Son's death a redeemed humanity to praise Him forever and ever and ever and ever.

Do you understand that? The reason that there are redeemed sinners is that so heaven might be populated with people who give glory to Christ. The Father loved the Son. The Father desires to give to the Son a redeemed humanity so that they can praise Him, and adore Him and worship Him and love Him and serve Him forever and we are that love gift. To look at it another way, the Father seeks a bride for His Son, the redeemed are the bride and He gives the bride to His Son. It's not for us, we're incidental. It's the Father's love for the Son that led Him to give the gift that we are, the redeemed humanity, to the Son and according to what the New Testament says, when we're all gathered and given to the Son, the Son will take us all, along with Himself and give us back to the Father in a reciprocal act of divine love. We are caught up in this incredible divine love between the Father and the Son.

But, you know, when you wanted a bride in the ancient times, you had to pay. If you were the bridegroom, the father says, "Here's the bride, but you have to pay the price." Sometimes called a dowry, wasn't it? Well the price that Jesus had to pay was the cross, offer Himself as a sacrifice to satisfy God's justice, the greatest sacrifice ever made, the purest act of love ever done. It releases salvation grace forward and backward across all of human history to all who have repented and believed. Jesus Christ is not then killed because His plan went bad, because the revolution was rejected. He is placed on the cross by the Father and Isaiah 53 says it, it's unmistakably clear, "But the Lord was pleased to crush Him," Isaiah 53:10, "Putting Him to grief as a guilt offering for His good pleasure."

Let me say it again. "The Lord was pleased to crush Him, putting Him to grief as a guilt offering for His good pleasure." The death of Christ is no accident. He was sent to die and it pleased the Father to crush Him. And Isaiah 53 says He was wounded for our transgressions. He was bruised for our iniquities. He was chastened for our peace with God. And God was fully satisfied with His sacrifice and that's why He raised Him from the dead and exalted Him to His right hand, made Him a High Priest over His own and one day will send Him to establish His everlasting Kingdom. He didn't die an unexpected death. He said many times, John likes to record this, "My hour has not come, My hour has not come, My hour is not come," and then you come to chapter 12 of John and all of a sudden He says, "The hour has come." John 12, John 13, even John 17, He refers to the hour, the moment, the epoch moment. Matthew 26:18 He calls it "My time...My time." This is the man delivered over by the predetermined will of God.

Well just for a glimpse and it's only a moment to do so, we come to the bit players in this drama. God is directing everything. But let's just meet the first little group. The Chief Priests and the scribes were seeking how to seize Him by stealth and kill Him, for they were saying not during the festival, otherwise there might be a riot of the people."

So what's the one time they didn't want to kill Him? During the Passover...during this period. Why? Jerusalem had swelled with hundreds of thousands of pilgrims who had all come for this most

attended feast of the year. But they need to get together to kill Him. They've got a plan to do it but they don't want to do it during this week. The Sanhedrin again is who they are, the Chief Priests and the scribes is just representative of this ruling group, 70 men plus the High Priests who were involved in all these plans.

Matthew 26:3 says, "They met together at the house of the High Priest Caiaphas." They met at his house, in his courtyard to plan how to kill Christ. They couldn't tolerate Him anymore. He came in. He attracted all the interest of the people in that supposed triumphal entry. He attacked their temple. He had taught all day Wednesday, contrary to everything they believed. So in John, I'll take you to the meeting now, the meeting minutes are recorded in John 11:47. The Chief Priests and the Pharisees convened a council and were saying, "What are we doing? This man is performing many signs. If we let Him go on like this, all men will believe in Him and the Romans will come and take away our place and our nation."

You know, for the people in the Sanhedrin, it was about politics. Sadducees didn't care about theology at all and they were the main players. They were afraid that they were going to lose their freedoms as a nation. They were going to lose some social ground. They were going to lose some political clout and some power because if the people go after Jesus, the Romans are going to come and they're going to see this as a threat to them. We're going to be in trouble.

So Caiaphas, who was High Priest, said to them, "You know nothing at all. You guys aren't any good at coming up with an answer, what are you going to do?" Verse 50, "Nor do you take into account that it's expedient for you that one man die for the people rather than the whole nation perish." We have to kill Him. And so verse 53 says, "So from that day on, they planned together to kill Him." They concocted some scheme as to how they were going to do it. The only thing we know about their plan was, they weren't going to do it this week, right? That's what Mark says. They were saying, "Not during the festival otherwise there might be a riot of the people." They're going to seize Him by stealth, the word is *dolos* in the Greek and it means deceit. It actually is a word for fish hook which is very deceitful, if you're a fish. They're going to seize Him by stealth and then they're going to...the Greek word here is they're going to murder Him, *opoktonos*, but they're going to do it without a riot because they think He's so popular.

By the way, they overestimated the people, didn't they? Boy, they really overestimated the loyalty of the fickle, fickle people. But one thing for sure, we do not want to arrest Him in public and we do not want to kill Him this week. We want to hold Him over until the Unleavened Bread Feast is over and the crowds have gone. Passover would be the absolute worst time to arrest and murder Jesus and the worst time of that whole time would be to do it on Passover on that Friday when all the Passover lambs were being killed. Everybody would know it. It was the worst time, but they weren't in charge of that. It was God's time. It was God's time. In fact, God moved them so fast, they arrested Him in the night. They tried Him in the morning. They crucified Him in the morning. He was dead by three in the

afternoon, off the cross through the request of Joseph of Arimathea, body down, in the grave before the day is over. They couldn't postpone what God had designed.

They murdered Him at the very time they wanted to avoid murdering Him. You know, their attitude toward Him was prophesied too, in case you thought the Jews would love the Messiah when He came. Listen to Isaiah 49:7, "Thus says the Lord, the Redeemer of Israel and His holy One, to the despised One, to the One hated by the nation." This is God talking to His Son who will be despised and hated by the nation.

What is Isaiah 53:3 say? "He was despised and He was...what?...rejected." Despised and rejected. They wanted Him dead. But not then.

However, Proverbs 19:21 says, "There are many plans in a man's heart, nevertheless the Lord's counsel, it will stand." One of the greatest providential workings of God ever was the murder of Jesus. So the Jewish leaders set their plans but their plans are thwarted and replaced by the plan of God.

So we meet the enemies. Now tonight, as I told you, we're going to meet the friends, the betrayer, and the followers, the disciples and the role they play and it's all equally fascinating.

You honor us, Lord, with the gift of Your truth. There's no greater treasure as the psalmist said, "It is more desirable than gold, yea then more fine gold, sweeter than the honey from the honeycomb. How precious is truth, especially that which demonstrates Your glory, Your power, Your control, Your purpose as over against the foolishness of men. How precious is that truth which exalts Christ. Lord, we thank You that when we look at the cross and see the worst that men have done, we see at the same time the best that You have done. The worst act of sinners is the best act of God. We thank You that even in the details, Lord, we see the supernatural character of every single movement in this incredible drama which shows Your invisible hand because it pleased You to crush Your Son for us. Thank You for this glorious gospel. We thank You that You love us and that You sent Your Son to be the propitiation for our sins and not ours only, but the sins of the whole world. That He came to satisfy Your justice by bearing our sins in His own body. This glorious truth is our salvation when we believe it, to reject it is only to increase condemnation of how much greater punishment will the one be who rejects this, says the Scripture. Better to never have known than to have known and rejected it.

Lord, I would ask that You would do a work in hearts today. If there are some here who do not know Christ, have not embraced Him as savior and Lord, who are still under Your condemnation who will pay forever in hell for their own sins because they rejected the sacrifice that was made in Christ, O God, may this be the day that You would awaken their dead souls, give sight to their blind eyes, hearing to their deaf ears, and a will to believe. Make them willing in the day of Your power to open their hearts to Christ, to be saved from judgment. We thank You that even in the darkest hour of human history, from a human perspective, the light of Your presence and purpose shines brightly.

We thank You that we can worship You. We pray that You'll bring even now to the prayer room those who need help, that folks will be able to find someone to talk to, or someone to counsel them or to show the Word of God to them, or pray with them that, Lord, any questions might not remain unanswered but people might receive the help they need. That's why we're here to offer that. Thank You for all that we've enjoyed this morning in this worship together, and our hearts rejoice again in the blessings that have come to us through Your Son, our Savior in whose name we pray. Amen.

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